THE WAY TO HELL.

THE way to hell! What an awful sound! Are there any so infatuated as to be walking in this way? Oh yes, for our blessed Lord says, "Broad is the way which leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat," Matt. vii. 13.

Perhaps, reader, you are walking in this downward road, do not be offended at the supposition, but rather suffer me to point out briefly a few of the marks by which you may learn whither the road you are walking in will conduct you. In taking an ordinary journey, you look out continually for the friendly sign-post to guide you on your way, and prevent your wandering into the wrong path. Permit me then, as you are journeying through life, to give you a few friendly signs by which you may judge of the way in which you are going. You are journeying, as I said, through life, and this journey will terminate either in heaven or hell. How very important then is it that you should take heed to the way, lest you should wander from the right path, and not find your mistake till you come to your journey's end! Then it will be impossible to return.

The way of the drunkard is the way to hell. For Isaiah, the prophet of the Lord, hath said, "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink. Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure," Isa. v. 11—14. Drunkenness destroys the reputation, ruins the constitution, reduces to beggary, impairs the reason, leads to lying, swearing, and contention, hardens the heart, and drowns the soul in perdition. Stop, traveller,—drunkenness leads to hell.

The way of the liar is the way to hell. This sin is very hateful to God. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord," Prov. xii. 22. It is the characteristic of a wicked man, as David says; "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies," Psa. lviii. 3. Lying proceeds from the devil himself, and our Saviour called him the father of lies; see John viii. 44. He was the first liar, and all who indulge in this sin

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are his children, and will finally be sent to spend eternity with him, for "all liars shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," Rev. xxi. 8. Stop, traveller,—this is the way to hell.

The way of the swearer is the way to hell. Every oath he utters is a prayer for the curse of God. He calls (dreadful thought!) for damnation on his body, his eyes, his limbs, his soul. Heaven was not made for swearers, therefore hell-fire must be their portion for ever and ever. For turn to Zech. v., and you will read at the third verse, "Every one that sweareth shall be cut off." Jeremiah declares, "Because of swearing the land mourneth," Jer. xxiii. 10. Oh! that every swearer, and every profane person, would bear continually in mind that God himself hath said, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain," Exod. xx. 7.

The way of the sabbath-breaker is the way to hell. Isaiah says, "Blessed is the man that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it," Isa. lvi. 2. But what blessing can rest upon the head of that man who wilfully disobeys the plain command of the God who made him, and who will one day judge him. That great and glorious, yet dreadful Being hath said, "Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy." It is his own day—the Lord's day. Six days he hath given us to do all necessary work in; but this he hath reserved to himself, and requires it to be kept holy. He who disobeys this reasonable, and ever profitable injunction, will find to his eternal cost that the way of the sabbath-breaker is indeed the way to hell. Stop, friend, I beseech you.

The way of the licentious and impure is a certain way to hell. Solomon says, in Prov. ii. (which chapter deserves your serious attention,) of the strange woman, "Her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life." And again; "Her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword; her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell," Prov. v. 4, 5. "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death," Prov. vii. 27. Think you that you can be admitted into heaven among the pure in heart, and the undefiled, with the foul stain of your vices upon you? Are you not fitter company for the fallen angels and unclean spirits? Oh, listen

to the warning voice, and " remove thy way from her, and come not nigh the door of her house, lest thou mourn at the last when thy flesh and thy body are consumed," Prov. v. 8—11. Repair, I entreat you, while it is yet called to-day, to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. In the precious blood of Christ you may be cleansed from all your iniquities. Flee from the wrath to come to Christ Jesus, who is our only refuge.

The way of the mere moralist is undoubtedly the way to hell. And this is so smooth, so apparently innocent, nay almost praiseworthy a course in the eyes of the world, that many thousands are wofully deceived. They think if they abstain from open and gross vices, if they pay every man his own, and preserve a character for integrity and uprightness among men, they are safe for eternity, and that God could not in justice frown them from his presence. Especially, if they are diligent in attending their usual places of worship on Sunday; if they are kind parents, or husbands, or wives; if they give alms, and are charitable to the poor and afflicted, then they think that they have merited heaven. Awful delusion! no man ever yet merited any thing at the hand of God but eternal death.

These characters often appear further from the kingdom of heaven than the others, as they are more fortified against conviction. Of such our Saviour said, that publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before them. Not one act of religious worship, or of benevolence, can atone for any one single act of disobedience. Could we spend every moment from the present time till the day of our death in acts of penitence and holiness, still there would remain a fearful sum of past transgressions, of sins of omission and commission. Self-righteous moralist, you may try for ever to find out a way whereby you can be justified before God; you might give all your goods to feed the poor, and even give your body to be burned, but all in vain. The apostle expressly declares, " By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast," Eph. ii. 8, 9.

But is there no way of escape? There is; Jesus Christ is a Saviour. He is able, he is willing to save unto the uttermost. He too is the only Saviour; and if ever you are saved, it will be—it must be—through him. He hath died that you might live. He hath borne the curse for our sins,

that we might obtain the blessing of his righteousness. He hath purchased heaven, and a fearful price he paid for it; but none will enter there, unless they are here first prepared and rendered meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

The interesting and important question then is, How can I be saved from hell? Our Saviour says, "Ye must be born again." "Repent and be converted, and I will heal you."

You must repair to the cross of Christ; you must renounce all hopes in your own performances; all trust in your own righteousness; you must look to the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," said the apostle to the jailor. Our blessed Lord himself hath said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

Finally: all who are not walking in the road to heaven, are going in the way to hell. In this number the hypocrite, the mere professor of religion, the unjust, the unchaste, the slanderer, are included. Hear what St. Paul says, "Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. vi. 9.

Oh, turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die? Adopt the only means of escape. Hasten to the throne of grace, bow your knees in humble, earnest prayer to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; confess your sins before him, and entreat forgiveness in the name and through the merits of our adorable Redeemer.

Read your Bible with serious and devout attention, and pray for the teachings of the Holy Spirit, and that he may guide you into the way of truth.

Do not delay going to God till you are better; this will never do; it is like saying when you are ill with a fever, "I will go to the physician when I am got well." It was sinners Christ came to save. It is sinners whom he invites, and of him it is truly said, "This man receiveth sinners."

May the blessing of our gracious God accompany the perusal of this little tract, and may it lead some poor sinner to avoid the way to hell, and to enter on the way to heaven!

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